1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

dug in the sandy soil between the ankles and the infant then has a simple and comforting toilet ready made for it by the mother. Afterwards its loins are washed and the hole covered up with sand. During the entire infant stage breast-feeding is carried on easily and simply upon demand by the infant for the breast. Indeed the breast is generally used as a pacifier.

A typical scene in a mother's hut illustrates the way in which the introduction of a new baby to society is carried out. The mother and her friends sit around chatting and they pass the baby around, dandling it in turn, although the baby remains with the mother for a large part of the time. A very common topic of conversation at such times is, quite unsurprisingly, the new baby. But unlike a similar group of American ladies most of the talk is *to* and not *about* the baby. The mother and many of those present tell the uncomprehending infant in sing-song voices about its kindred, "So-and-so is your father, so-and-so is your brother, so-and-so is your sister," and so on through a vast complex of kinship links on both the mother's and the father's side of the family. The infant is also told in the same way about its neighborhood, its section of the town, or its village, its political leaders, and so on. "So-and-so is your village head, so-and-so is your district head, and this is your tribe and this is your emirate, and this is your *Shehu*, and so-and-so is your Waziri." The family occupation is also mentioned and how soon the infant is going to help in such-and-such activities around the compound and grow up into successful adulthood within the framework of all the associations and expectations that are referred to constantly.

Why tell a baby about its social connections, occupational expectations, political affiliations, and so on? Certainly later on, when it can understand a little more of the language, such talk is a means of initiating it into the social groupings of the society. However at this stage another function is performed. The child is a new member of the society, and it is being introduced into and given a recognizable place in its social setting. The new member means new relationships. So-and-so who did not have a younger brother's son, now has one; someone else now has a new cousin and perhaps a future spouse; or someone else now has a sister's son or an additional one. The coming of the *tiful* or infant creates changes because a new member has been added and in introducing it to society people are asked to shift their understanding of the organizations which now must include this new member. By constantly referring to these new relationships during the infant's first few months people close to the family affirm to themselves and finally to others the fact that many relationships are different now that the new baby has arrived safely.

As far as training goes, the *tiful* is too young to be very harshly dealt with or to be told not to do this or that. Its primary task is to survive and grow into a useful, law-abiding, member of its community.

Childhood

Infancy ends as weaning begins, about the end of the eighteenth month although a good deal of variation exists in actual practice so that many are weaned earlier. In general weaning is carried out with a matter-of-fact attitude as if to say,

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862 "This is just a common, everyday matter," and should not be thought of as giving anyone any trouble. When difficulties do arise an older woman of the compound or the family offers her breast as a pacifier. In the odd case where this does not succeed pressures tighten up. The breast is referred to as "dirty" or specifically as "excreta" and in extreme instances bitter grounds of leaves are put on the breast and the lesson is very quickly learned.

861 862 858 516 826 After weaning, pressures are slowly brought to bear to teach the child proper ways of living among its people. Thus, as soon as a child can totter, the adult woman in whose hut he is sleeping starts to enforce the rule that he or she should go outside to perform toilet functions, stoop over with knees bent and buttocks near the ground using only the left hand for any attentions necessary to elimination. Later on as language skills develop the importance of the left hand is more highly emphasized as well as the advisability of being discreet about toilet functions. After the age of two and a half or three, scolding gets more intense and the child is told it is dirty or bad for urinating on the floor. Naturally the severity of the training depends to a large extent as well on the particular situation, the mood and personality of the mother, or other socializing agents present, as well as the age of the child. Thus a grandmother was observed who was not overly excited when her two-year-old grandson urinated on the floor, but she became quite angry when he wet her bed.

861 Patient but continuous teaching by adults in the household is a constant part of everyday activities for the young child. The following excerpt from field notes tells its own story:

> A plate of food is on the floor of the hut gathering flies. The grandmother says to her little grandson, "Kachella, pick up the plate. Now, take it over there. Be careful, there is food on the plate. Now, take that other plate and cover the food over. (Plates are made of grass.) That's right, very good." This simple operation which would have taken the grandmother a few seconds has been carried out after two patient minutes of instruction to the child who could not yet speak more than a few words.

867 868 Childhood also ushers in the establishment of sex roles. Boys are now called "small boys" and girls are "small girls" or "three heads" referring to the three-pronged hair style of prepubescent girls. Boys and girls wear different clothes and begin fairly soon to associate with members of their own sex and to carry out chores that are specifically for boys or for girls. In play groups based on sex they wander freely about the village or neighborhood of the city gathering like flies to honey at the slightest hint of any excitement, and wandering further afield from their own compound as they get older. The girl comes quickly under the authority of the women of the household especially her own mother if she is brought up at home. She learns the intricacies of preparing food, carrying water, and the ever-present task of grinding millet either at a quern or by pounding it on a large wooden mortar. The boys begin to gather firewood, help with the farming, run messages, gather grass for a horse if there is one, tend the goats and sheep of the compound, and learn the family dry-season occupation. Pressure to learn these skills is slow but definite. Punishments are rare, but severe. The child is beaten with a rod or whip until neighbors and friends succeed in persuading the parents to cease or desist. Reasons given for the beating often concern the sudden, or con-

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603 that is your wife, is it?, or to her ♀ that is your husband, eh?

[152] All the restrictions on any show of emotion with own parents are noticeable by their absence in the affective nature of the grandparent joking relationship with its openly expressible fondness and friendship. That there is some discipline involved is indicated by the fact that the child is very often socialized in a grandparent's

[862] house. One grandparent was observed very patiently taking the left hand of his little namesake out of the food bowl, every time the child attempted to eat with this taboo instrument. One adult informant summed up his own attitudes towards the relationship as follows:

> You may pull your kaka's (grandparent's) beards, or go into his house and take his possessions, and he will not mind - he is happy because his children have borne children. If you have a yeiya (great-grandparent) alive, it is the same with him.

[602] [553] Although the suli (joking) relationship holds for all members of the second and third ascendant and descendant generations it focuses for an individual in its most memorable and frequently emphasized form, between himself and his grandparent-namesake, his

603 chuwuna. Many Kanuri names are convertible from male to female

553 [551] forms and thus, cases of a grandchild named after a grandparent of opposite sex are known. The important point is that the chuwuna (namesake) relationship is most often associated with the practise

553 of grandparent joking relations and possible adoptions. This obser-

571 vation is validated by looking at other chuwuna relationships in the kinship system or between close friends. If a child is named after a father's brother or his father's friend, he and that person have a mildly permissive joking relationship. They address each

854 shirt, and nothing below the waist, except when they are swaddled to the mother's back. When the baby defecates or urinates indoors, as is often the case, it is cleaned up with no great show of alarm, 853 until the end of the first eighteen months. Breast feeding occurs on demand, and is used as a pacifier.

Childhood

862 [858] 714] With the onset of childhood, which is formalized at eighteen months by weaning, the overt pressures of socialization begin for the young child. No systematic data were gathered on the effects of this formal change-over from breast-feeding. Everyone knew of a wide range of variation in reaction on the part of the infants; some babies wean easily, others require much more training. In the latter case, the more stringent techniques are utilized, but still with a matter of fact, unperturbed attitude towards the inevitability of the weaning procedure.

In most cases the child has a female grandparent either in the compound or nearby. If not, then a senior woman of the compound or of the family helps with the weaning by offering her dry breast as a pacifier. The mother spreads the process over several months by constantly attempting to replace the breast with a cup. When the child runs to its mother desirous of the breast, the parent refers to it negatively, as dirt, or even excrement. With difficult cases bitter tasting grounds of brown leaves are put on the breasts to discourage continued efforts by the child to obtain the mother's milk.

597 It is just after weaning that most Kanuri adoptions take place. A very rough estimate of adoptions, taken from genealogical data, would put the figure at somewhere between 35-45% for the present